Dreiser Studies

ISSN 0896-6362

Volume 28, Number 1 Spring 1997

CONTENTS

Shawn St. Jean,
Social Deconstruction and *An American Tragedy* 3

Lawrence E. Hussman,
The World According to Timothy Titcomb: Putting *Sister Carrie* into Context 25

Irina Bassis,
Notable Elements in the Translation of *Sister Carrie* into Russian 35

News & Notes 52

Social Deconstruction and *An American Tragedy*

Shawn St. Jean
Kent State University

Of all major aspects of his work, Theodore Dreiser's social criticism is perhaps the most elusive and has therefore received the least sustained critical attention. It cannot be called obvious at any level, else readers would not be forced to wonder over such basic issues as whether a book like *The Financier* (1912) is a celebration or an indictment of capitalism. We know of "Dreiser's full endorsement of the Communist party and its goals from the early 1930s to his death in 1945" (Pizer, *Cambridge* 12), and with almost equal surety accept the historical truism that "During the twenties . . . the act of rejection of American cultural codes and economic values (a rejection most clearly enacted by the expatriates' self-exile) was almost a requirement for serious consideration as an artist" (Pizer, *Cambridge* 9). Certainly Dreiser's bids for the Nobel prize for literature for *An American Tragedy* (1925) demonstrate his wish for "serious consideration." Yet, even though the author extended a tour of Russia from a week to three months in 1927-28, he returned promptly to live out his days as a staunch American. Six of Dreiser's novels predate his later definitive commitment to the alternative political ideology of his day and the last two appeared twenty years later, at the end of his life, and have not been considered to be reliable indicators of the author's attitudes in his prime, or, indeed, worthy of much critical scrutiny at all.[1] Nor do any of his major works contain the kind of overt treatments of communism achieved later by writers like John Steinbeck and Richard Wright.

Thus, scholars dealing with "Dreiser's Politics" should have less confident recourse to biography than theoreticians have recently brought to bear on the author

and his work in the realms of feminism and psychoanalysis.[2] Critics must, as ever, turn to his works themselves. And the high degree of ambiguity wrought by seeming conflicts in events and language–for example, Frank Cowperwood's philanthropic endowments versus his cutthroat financial tactics, Carrie's rise to fame and fortune offset by her loneliness–have not deterred some from commenting decisively on Dreiser's social agendas. Philip Gerber writes that, in *An American Tragedy*,

> the structure of American society itself was attacked; the book's readers would find themselves disclosed as participants in a tragic situation of immense proportions; they would soon discover themselves responsible for a hero who was a murderer. Although in paying the highest penalty for his crime Clyde preserved at least the facade of official justice and morality, Dreiser was calculatedly and openly set on a bold attempt to exonerate the boy, lifting the responsibility off his shoulders and placing it squarely upon the inhabitants of every city and hamlet in the nation. (*Theodore Dreiser* 148)

My reading of the novel proceeds from similar assumptions, though Gerber's *Theodore Dreiser* (1964, revised in 1992) was too broad in scope to offer detailed evidence for his claim. However, I would emphasize that Dreiser's complex interweaving of Clyde's potential free agency with external forces like societal conventions and chance inspire in me no such confidence that Clyde was to be cleared completely of responsibility. Certainly we lack proof that Dreiser's society accepted it squarely, for, as Gerber says, Clyde's execution apparently satisfies "official" or popular morality. Widespread acceptance of complicity on the part of Dreiser's contemporaries is further belied by information from Vrest Orton's book *Dreiserana*. Shelley Fisher Fishkin summarizes:

> The opinions of readers as to what "really happened" in the rowboat were so strong and diverse that Boni and Liveright decided to capitalize on them by running a contest. The essay contest they ran, on the topic, "Was Clyde Griffiths Guilty of Murder in the First Degree?," drew hundreds of entries from readers across the country and was eventually won by a law professor in Virginia. Because of the special openness and ambiguity with which Dreiser narrated the death of Roberta, readers were attracted to the idea of constructing interpretations of the event on their own. (133)

The pervasive fascination with the death scene which concludes Book II and the focus on Clyde's culpability, it seems, tended to diffuse in many people's minds "the recognition of society's guilt and the agonized questioning of Clyde's share in it at the end of the novel" (Hussman 131).

After reconsidering the scene and its surrounding events, I will argue that the close reading practiced by Dreiser's initial audience might profitably be recast in a theoretical mode heretofore untried by Dreiser scholars: deconstruction. The theory is most helpful in dramatically demonstrating that the *ambiguity* of Clyde's responsibility–which if proven unsolvable (or undecidable, to use the deconstructor's term) forces the emergence of alternate possibilities like public complicity–is the social nexus of the novel.[3] Particularly concerned with undermining the implicit claims of textual works to establish static meanings based on language, deconstruction combines close scrutiny of even single words and phrases with the premise that "no text is capable of representing determinately, far less of demonstrating, the 'truth' about any subject" (Abrams 203).[4] Far from claiming the text is meaningless, then, a deconstructive reading of *An American Tragedy* furthers Dreiser's own

efforts to show that the massive search for "truth" about Clyde's agency in Roberta's alleged murder prosecuted by individual characters, as well as the public within and outside of the novel, is misguided and doomed to failure.

It should also prove useful to examine how Dreiser prepares for Roberta's death and the subsequent investigation. By casting Clyde's wanderings after the "American Dream" in such tenuous language that he appears hardly to have any autonomous goals, Dreiser portrays his protagonist as partial free agent and partial "sleeper agent," unconsciously pursuing agendas set by others.

Book II begins with Clyde having moved to Chicago under a concealed identity, following the death of the child in Kansas City. He has already limited his options by adopting this fugitive existence: everything he says and does must protect his secret. But his chance encounter with his uncle Samuel Griffiths opens a new door to him. In response to Clyde's suggestion that he might be of use in Samuel's collar factory in Lycurgus, New York, his uncle makes a place for him:

> Accordingly, about a week after that, the nature of Clyde's work having been finally decided upon, a letter was dispatched to him to [sic] Chicago by Samuel Griffiths himself in which he set forth that *if he chose* he might present himself any time now within the next few weeks. *(AT* 176, my emphasis)

Clyde can hardly be said to make the choice indicated, though it is undeniably available. His response is instantaneous: "And upon receipt of this Clyde was very much thrilled and at once wrote tohis mother that he had actually secured a place with his uncle and was going to Lycurgus" (*AT* 176). Thus passes (so fleetingly we scarcely notice) one of many ironic instances in which Clyde, while attempting to widen the options of an unclear

future (in this case, to mount the corporate ladder) actually limits his future agency.

It could be argued that because Clyde has been conditioned by earlier experiences in that monument to capitalism, the Green-Davidson Hotel, and by the manipulative demands of Hortense Briggs, no choice *can* be made. Clyde simply cannot help mindlessly pursuing the American Dream as he conceives it: better jobs bring more money and possessions, hence higher social status. I don't mean to imply that Clyde should be blamed for going to Lycurgus–only that he has started down the path that will end in Roberta's murder without considering alternatives or costs and without consciously choosing although, according to the text, the choice is his to make. It is a modest but crucial beginning, posing as it does the murky question of Clyde's responsibility for the direction his life takes. From here, he embarks on a career of unsuccessful bids for freedom which backfire because each, as we see by cruel dramatic irony, is tainted by his desire for freedom *without* responsibility.

Clyde places himself in a position of obligation to his family, although he thinks this will open up his future. He is, of course, mistaken. He must now maintain a more respectable standard of living, barely within his means, of dress, of behavior, all to protect the sacred name of Griffiths. He even limits himself sexually, and by seeking and obtaining promotion at work he exposes himself to more temptation and less freedom to fulfill it as supervisor of a department of women–he has been forbidden by his cousin Gilbert to fraternize.

His involvement with working girl Roberta Alden is an ill-conceived attempt to regain some freedom for himself, an outlet and test for his growing financial (and hence social) means and desires for self-gratification. However, from the first the affair is secretive, to protect his position at the factory and hers. The more they taste of the freedom

the other's company brings, the more agonizing the realization that they cannot be together publicly. Dreiser takes pains to establish that, while this relationship may be engendered and driven by mutual desire, the terms of its development are set exclusively by social convention, which always manifests itself in unstable language. This tension is seen dramatically when Clyde's pressure for a sexual union, which he veils in euphemisms like "stop in for a little while" (*AT* 289) and "take a fellow to her room if she wants to for a little while" (*AT* 290), begin to overpower Roberta's resistance:

> The state of Roberta's mind for that night is not easily to be described. For here was true and poignant love, and in youth true and poignant love is difficult to withstand. Besides it was coupled with the most stirring and grandiose illusions in regard to Clyde's local material and social condition—illusions which had little to do with anything he had done to build up, but were based rather on conjecture and gossip over which he had no control. And her own home, as well as her personal situation was so unfortunate—no promise of any kind save in his direction. And here she was quarreling with him—sending him away angry. On the other hand was he not beginning to push too ardently toward those troublesome and no doubt dreadful liberties and familiarities which her morally trained conscience would not permit her to look upon as right? How was she to do now? What to say? (*AT* 293)

Hardly a sentence or phrase here does not reveal how the developing relationship is socially (verbally) defined and hence without the stable meaning language claims for itself but cannot deliver. First, Dreiser's narrator admits difficulty of casting Roberta's mental state (which is temporary and conditional, "for that night") into words at all, since she is experiencing a tug-of-war between love

and morality, both linguistically elusive concepts. Even the phrase "true and poignant love," because repeated, calls attention to the fact that it has no referent but "here." "Here" might mean "in Roberta's mind," but it could also mean "in Clyde, as Roberta saw him," especially since she finds his entreaties "difficult to withstand." The second meaning tends toward irony, since as readers we doubt if Clyde's feelings ever qualify as love, let alone "true" (a word which, as always in the novel, is subverted and rendered useless: "love" and "true love" amount to a tautology). Jacques Derrida describes the kind of interpretational tension conjured here by the word "here" as *différance*, in which meanings are disseminated into multiple or infinite possibilities, a process which precludes any single one as correct.

Additionally, we recognize how, even to his intimate Roberta, Clyde depends on his connection to the wealthy Griffiths for definition and identity, a process designated twice in the passage as illusory. Because her own connections do not "promise" anything, Roberta turns more to Clyde, thus substituting potential happiness expressed through metaphor ("promise") for potential happiness based on "conjecture and gossip" ("illusion"). But Clyde, ironically, makes no promises, least of all for marriage.

Further, Roberta imagines Clyde's efforts in physical terms ("beginning to push") and her own defense as verbal ("quarreling," "sending him away"). But this is merely a semantic distinction, since in the entire book Clyde never accomplishes anything except through verbal persuasion or coercion, with the possible exception of running away. She wonders if she should do or say anything, and naturally chooses the latter because easier.[5] Her "morally trained conscience," that is, the inner voice which expresses learned codes of right and wrong, articulates little beyond the fear that "I will be a bad girl if

I do" (*AT* 293). Both social ostracism as a fallen woman and private moral degradation compete as signifieds in the epithet "bad girl."

The inevitable consummation takes place, Roberta's "protest[s] gainsaid" by Clyde (*AT* 299).[6] However, only under the questionable ties of a verbal contract do events proceed:

> Yet the thing once done, a wild convulsive pleasure motivating both. Yet, not without, before all this, an exaction on the part of Roberta to the effect that never—come what might (the natural consequences of so wild an intimacy strong in her thoughts) would he desert her, since without his aid she would be helpless. Yet, with no direct statement as to marriage. And he, so completely overcome and swayed by his desire, thoughtlessly protesting that he never would—never. She might depend on that, at least, although even then there was no thought in his mind of marriage. He would not do that. (*AT* 299)

As in scores of other passages, the favorite Dreiserian device "yet" repeatedly subverts and qualifies previous statements. And few passages in Dreiser more effectively illustrate the highly conditional nature of "truth" as a product of verbal subjectivity. Without explicitly stating marriage as her goal, Roberta relies first on her belief that Clyde and she share the same understanding of possible pregnancy and contingent validation by marriage; second, on an ambiguous promise from Clyde, who gives his "word" that he will not desert her. To him this promise does not signify marriage, or anything really, since his protest is "thoughtless." Roberta has "exacted" nothing, since to Clyde words are only a tool to be used and later abandoned, much as Roberta herself is. They both pointedly avoid the most obvious and stable word, "marriage," since it denotes irrevocable commitment and

would undermine the effect of carefully rendered rhetoric on each side. Thoreau once asked "Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other's eyes for an instant?" (*Walden* 10). Though he admired such romantic sentiments, Dreiser's answer rings clear in his novels: unfortunately not. The medium of imperfect utterances binds us together and, because imperfect, makes tragedy possible. Ironically, Clyde's pressure for sexual consummation against Roberta's will (pushing for his freedom at the expense of hers) does result in her pregnancy, an event that leads into an even more constrictive funnel of diminishing choices.

The most radical of Clyde's efforts at free agency is his attempt to move from the world of Roberta Alden to the world of society girl Sondra Finchley. To Clyde, Roberta and her child are merely a social and linguistic dead end because they represent action and responsibility. Roberta's letter to him at Twelfth Lake, threatening to expose him to the world, forces him to reply with a false commitment to her. Meanwhile, Sondra represents a path by which decisive action can be deferred indefinitely (he will marry her "someday"). By making one effort, eliminating Roberta, he can retire to a monied life in which meaningful choices will never again be required of him. However, he must do it in a manner that will preserve appearances. This paradox embodies perhaps the most devastating irony of Dreiser's novel: That freedom, for people who lack it, is thought to reside in wealth and social status, by means of which one is supposedly immune from the pressures that bear on ordinary people. This notion is partially borne out by Sondra's protective designation only as "Miss X" at the later trial. However, unknown to people like Clyde, wealth and status, as constructs of vast systems of human interaction, entail a greater investment in those systems. The Griffiths and Finchleys are later all forced to leave Lycurgus for fear of guilt by association

with Clyde *(AT* 745). Thus, the more perceived freedom, the less usable autonomy.

Clyde's conflicts reach their dramatic climax on Big Bittern, the lake to which he brings Roberta in order to dispose of her. He typically goes through his routine of delay: rowing around, chasing water lilies, eating lunch, taking pictures. The surprising thing about the scene is that, as much as it is internalized to Clyde's point of view, his agony is not generated a fraction as much by morality (his inner self is too inarticulate for this) as by the prospect of finally *doing something*:

> Yet why was he waiting now?
> What was the matter with him, anyhow?
> Why was he waiting?
> At this cataclysmic moment, and in the face of the utmost, the most urgent need of action, a sudden palsy of the will—of courage—of hate or rage sufficient . . . a static between a powerful compulsion to do and yet not to do. (*AT* 491-92)

This last sentence portrays Clyde as a perverted Hamlet figure: his future "be-ing" depends on "doing"; but unlike the prince of Denmark, Clyde has no moral quandary to mask his lack of courage. Now why is Clyde's crisis described as a "palsy of the *will*"? If will is the countering force of desire, Clyde should have no crisis here since his desires control him. Answer: In this instance, mere desire is not enough; Clyde must act (make a willful effort) to realize his desire, yet, again, he will not. At this moment he seems neither a determined being nor a free agent, since *he* does nothing. His cognitive paralysis during the "need of action" that will achieve his desire indicates the lack of a force operating on him, yet conversely, it also shows his lack of will. As with Hurstwood in *Sister Carrie*, before we find out what *would have happened* had the protagonist made the fatal choice, the conflict is resolved "by

accident"–a scene I will later treat in detail. Clyde himself doubts whether he is responsible: "And the thought that, after all, he had not really killed her. No, no. Thank God for that. He had not. And yet (stepping up on the near-by bank and shaking the water from his clothes) had he? Or, had he not?" (*AT* 494). Clyde's own wonder is a linguistic expression of unresolvable tension, of *différance*, and yet the overwhelming question[7] obtrudes itself: Is he guilty? This is precisely the question Book III concerns itself with: a massive search for the "truth" which leads to the trial and the jury's verdict.

After Clyde is captured, District Attorney Mason, unable to extract a plausible story from him, confers with Coroner Heit about the case:

> "Well, then that means an autopsy," Mason resumed. "As well as medical opinion as to the nature of those wounds. We'll have to know beyond a shadow of a doubt, Fred, and before that body is taken away from here, whether that girl was killed before she was thrown out of that boat, or just stunned and then thrown out, or the boat upset. That's very vital to the case, as you know. We'll never be able to do anything unless we're positive about those things . . . ." (*AT* 521)

Here Mason's voice seems to echo the reader's, who "can't do anything," that is, form an interpretation, without being sure of what exactly happened in the boat. Ironically, none of the choices Mason offers here, and clings to later, is entirely accurate according to the narrative. And he is the novel's crusader for truth: a man prejudiced by a "psychic sex scar" and his own political ambitions (*AT* 504).

In one of his many conferences with Clyde, the lawyer attempts to ply the truth from the defendant by expressing a sentiment later exploited to its fullest by Clyde's own lawyers:

> "Lying or just foolish thoughtless denial under such circumstances as these can't help you in the least. It can only harm you, and that's the truth . . . . it just occurs to me that there may be something in connection with this case, some extenuating circumstances, which, if they were related by you now, might throw a slightly different light on all this . . . ." (*AT* 561)

Of course, at the trial, Clyde will be forced to relate the story of his life, all the "extenuating circumstances" that Dreiser painstakingly relates in Book I. The sum of Clyde's earlier (and later) life is reconceptualized as refracting to and from the one moment on the lake, "throw [ing] . . . different light." However, all this talk of the truth is only rhetoric to Mason, who schemes to use whatever information he gets from Clyde to form his prosecution.

Meanwhile, Clyde's lawyers, Belknap and Jephson, decide that the story they have heard from him will never do if he is to be exculpated. Chapter XVI is devoted to a scene in which together they shed their own light on Clyde's actions prior to Roberta's death. Fearing that Clyde won't be able to stand the pressure of cross-examination against this newly concocted story, Jephson attempts to brace him up: "You're not guilty! You're not guilty, Clyde, see? You understand that fully by now, and you must always believe and remember that, because it's true . . . . You know what the truth is–and so do we. *But*, in order to get justice for you, we've had to get up something else–a dummy or substitute for the real fact . . ." (*AT* 631). We know from Jephson's and Belknap's private conversations that they both doubt Clyde's innocence, which is why they anticipate a jury's negative response to the story as they know it and concoct a new one. The lawyers know that Clyde's story of a "trance," or inability to control his own actions, will not be believed by others (*AT* 596). *Why not?* Because *no one*

else feels determined, even among other characters who inhabit the world of the novel. No one can sympathize with Clyde because of an ideological disjunction: people tend to interpret the effects of forces on all people by their experience of those forces on themselves. However, Dreiser calls this drive for consistency into question through the facts of Clyde's life. He is ultimately convicted on a critically fallacious notion of the uniformity of "truth." This is precisely why heredity and environment play such prominent roles in determining some characters and not others: they are different for everyone and everyone is affected differently by them.

Several minor misrepresentations contaminate the trial. Mason persists in his attempts to prove that Clyde deliberately hit Roberta on the head before she fell into the water. A lock of Roberta's hair placed by Burton Burleigh in the camera is produced as false evidence for this. Jephson, Clyde's own defense counsel, suppresses a letter from the captain of bellhops at the Green-Davidson that supports Clyde's good character. Finally, the one demurring juror is threatened into voting guilty. The reader, who has all these bits of information, is in a position to see the dramatic erosion of truth even in the face of its attempted reconstruction, the inaccessibility of what Dreiser calls "the distant pole" of truth (*SC* 73).

What no one in the courtroom can appreciate is that the situation requires more complex considerations than "guilt" or "innocence"—*because it is absolutely impossible that the murder scene occurred as described by the narrator.* Returning to the text in question:

> Yet (the camera still unconsciously held tight) pushing at her with so much vehemence as not only to strike her lips and nose and chin with it, but to throw her back sidewise toward the left wale which caused the boat to careen to the very water's edge. And then he, stirred by

> her sharp scream, (as much due to the lurch of the boat, as the cut on her nose and lip), rising and reaching half to assist or recapture her and half to apologize for the unintended blow—yet in doing so completely capsizing the boat—himself and Roberta being as instantly thrown into the water. And the left wale of the boat as it turned, striking Roberta on the head as she sank and then rose for the first time, her frantic, contorted face turned to Clyde, who by now had righted himself. For she was stunned, horror-struck, unintelligible with pain and fear—her lifelong fear of water and drowning and the blow he had so accidentally and all but unconsciously administered. (*AT* 492-93)

Lee Clark Mitchell notes a "surprising inconsistency" in this same passage: that Roberta's resurfacing for the "first time" is not followed by a second (Mitchell 55, 56). He makes the convincing suggestion that Dreiser "meant" this as a sign of the complexity of repetition–Roberta's body rises a second time only after her death. However, even this close a reading overlooks the even more surprising impossibility of the blow to the head that stuns Roberta.

The narrator states that she falls to the left wale of the boat, causing it to "careen to the very water's edge." Clyde rises to go to her–on the left–and the boat capsizes. The text doesn't say which way the boat flips, but we can be sure it isn't stern (Roberta's position) over bow (Clyde's position) or bow over stern, since rowboats simply don't do that by design. Since the left wale is at "the very water's edge" with Roberta's weight, and Clyde is going towards her, the boat must flip in that direction, meaning the *opposite* (right) wale would rise in the air and come down hard, the boat now upside-down. The *left wale* would merely spin on a nearly stationary axis, with virtually no downward movement or force for a blow. Yet the narrator states that the *left wale* strikes Roberta on the head. There is no way for this to happen, even if Roberta

falls straight down into the water, which is unlikely. There simply is no motion in the left wale that would cause it, even if her head *were* there–and she is far more likely to be at least a few feet to the left with the inertia of her fall–about where the right wale comes crashing down.

Once the impossibility of the scene reveals itself, the word "left" becomes a concentrated, extreme manifestation of the public's and Clyde's own questions about his guilt. Did he do it, or not? It forms what deconstructionists call an *aporia*, or central knot of indeterminacy in a text–a point at which the text breaks down, where language fails to provide stable meaning and where multiple interpretations are made possible. Now, the obvious explanation here is that it is really the right wale that strikes Roberta, and the text is in error (Dreiser *was* notorious for textual errors). However, such an explanation matters very little from the deconstructionist point of view. According to J. Hillis Miller:

> The deconstructive critic seeks to find, by this process of retracing, the element in the system studied which is alogical, the thread in the text in question which will unravel it all, or the loose stone which will pull down the whole building. The deconstruction, rather, annihilates the ground on which the building stands by showing that the text has already annihilated the ground, knowingly or unknowingly. Deconstruction is not a dismantling of the structure of a text but a demonstration that it has already dismantled itself. (qtd. in Abrams 206)

The text has read "left" at least since the first edition, and even were it shown to be a corruption of the manuscript the word stands as part of the received public artifact. Donald Pizer has used a similar notion to argue that the first published edition of *Sister Carrie*, even if censored, provides the best text for a critical edition.[8] Also, the

possibility that Dreiser made such a blatant error in a passage that is obviously so carefully constructed for its ambiguity (as supported by Mitchell's observation above, besides being the critical scene of the novel) seems unlikely. As a matter of fact, the inclusion of the specific "left" is remarkable for its *un*ambiguity in the passage. However, whether Dreiser *meant* "left" or "right" is not really at issue;[9] only what the text *says*, thereby failing to say.

We must account for the blow to Roberta's head. *It* is a fact of the narrative, as established by coroner's evidence at the trial. However, despite Mitchell's assertion that "other than Clyde, only the reader has been present at the scene itself" we now have no direct way of knowing how the injury was really sustained (Mitchell 63). We cannot rely on the narrator, whose "omniscient" point of view has been exposed as erratic at best. *Perhaps* Clyde does strike Roberta with an oar as he had planned and Mason later asserts. Or maybe there *is* more than one blow with the camera. The possibilities are now limited only by the reader's imagination.

Unreliable narration is nothing new. However, the narrator is usually a character in the story–not omniscient. If we can't trust him at such a crucial moment, how many other details might be inaccurate? Clyde could be more guilty–or more innocent–than we have previously imagined. He could be insane. What would *that* say about the system that convicts and executes him?

What if the force of repression is so strong that it not only buries the truth from Clyde's consciousness, but from that of the narrator as well and, by extension, the reader? The whole of Book III, especially the recreations of the trial, is concerned with how the truth is altered by repression–and what is the truth here? These questions bear directly on Dreiser's narrative evasions at crucial moments when guilt would normally be assigned, but

readers instead feel invited to decide for themselves. However, the novel's deconstructing of the simple polarization of "guilty" and "not guilty," words with enough power to determine a man's life or death but not enough to approach "truth," allows us to see two crucial points: (1) Each term has less than static boundaries, and partakes some of the meaning of the other, and (2) because these terms imply totality but cannot deliver it, new signifying constructs, and hence new ways of thinking about human responsibility, are necessary.

Dreiser, in service of creating the most "realistic" form of fiction he can, may be illustrating by sacrifice of the narrator the power of Jephson's words to Clyde: "You know what the truth is–and so do we. But, in order to get justice for you, we've had to get up something else–a dummy or substitute for the real fact . . ." (*AT* 631). I would repeat that, whether Dreiser did purposely build unstable signifieds and signifiers into his scenes or not, they do exist and add up to a commentary that no system of explanation can really access the "truth" of human behavior. That is why Dreiser's "variable determinism," in which characters are alternately determined by external forces and chance, but have some measure of free will, is as enlightening a paradigm as we have: it positions humankind *between* the two systems we have always relied on. The novel deconstructs both fate and free will, since Clyde embodies both and neither. Dreiser's text creates a new realm of naturalistic thematic exploration: that in a world where action and responsibility are relinquished, the truth itself in its empirical form (if there even is one) is *unrecoverable.* Dreiser had claimed outright twenty-five years earlier in his first novel that mankind "is even as a wisp in the wind" (*SC* 73). However, human beings are inevitably drawn toward "the distant pole of truth," that is, not only toward the triumph of free will over desire, but the mastery of language which

expresses both. The as-yet only partial victory in this struggle allows *An American Tragedy* to function as social critique. We are forced to confront the lingering relativism of "truth" for each of us before we can move toward the common ground of justice for all.[10]

Notes

[1] *The Bulwark* (1946) and *The Stoic* (1947) were both published posthumously. In general, textual scholars doubt whether either exists in the form Dreiser would have finally wanted to present to the public, while critics question their literary merits and note their departure from subject matter and treatment that characterized the author's earlier work.

[2] "Dreiser's Politics" is a chapter of F. O. Matthiessen's *Theodore Dreiser* (1951), the first methodical analysis of the author's social ethics as expressed in his novels. See Miriam Gogol's collection *Theodore Dreiser: Beyond Naturalism* (1995) for psychoanalytic and feminist readings of Dreiser's works which rely substantially on biographical evidence. Two recently published works, *Dreiser's Russian Diary,* edited for the University of Pennsylvania's Dreiser Edition by Thomas P. Riggio and James L. W. West, III, and "Dreiser Constructs Russia" by Andrea Wolff, demonstrate that the author's constantly varying pronouncements on the relative merits of capitalism and communism in public and in diaries and letters make documentary evidence of Dreiser's political agendas at any given time dangerous support for critical readings of his fiction. For instance, although books like *Sister Carrie*, *The "Genius,"* and *An American Tragedy* contain apparent indictments of conspicuous consumerism, Riggio's "Introduction" points out that "Conditions at home looked pretty good to Dreiser

in 1927. He had finally published a best-seller, *An American Tragedy* (1925), and this, along with a lucrative film contract, had allowed him to share in the short-lived prosperity of Coolidge's America. Consequently, his inclination was to praise capitalism at the expense of the Russian system" (6). Wolff compares the *Russian Diary* to the published travelogue *Dreiser Looks at Russia* (1928) and discerns an "ambivalent attitude," one by which Dreiser's "reaction to America as well as to Russia was determined by a pattern of rapprochement and withdrawal" (25).

[3] Lawrence E. Hussman, Jr., in *Dreiser and his Fiction: A Twentieth-Century Quest* (1983), offers a detailed nontheoretical treatment of the novel along similar lines. He parts company with Gerber in the degree of Clyde's responsibility: instead of "exonerating" his protagonist, Hussman claims, Dreiser merely "attempt[s] to shift the largest measure of guilt from Clyde to society" (131).

[4] I rely for my argument on some basic concepts of Jacques Derrida's model of deconstruction, for which the seminal texts are *Of Grammatology*, *Speech and Phenomena*, and *Writing and Difference* (all 1967). By no means have I attempted a comprehensive view or implementation of this complex method, but have adhered to the principle expressed by Paul de Man that close readings of the past can always be made closer. For expediency and clarity's sake I refer to M. H. Abrams' cogent summary of the theory in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (1988).

[5] Dreiser's characters often attempt to substitute words for actions, even when actions become absolutely necessary. Most learn of the ineffectuality of language

only when it is too late and effective action has been precluded. A pervasive example is the "wavering" and delay characteristic of Carrie Meeber, George Hurstwood, Lester Kane, Eugene Witla, and Clyde, always accompanied by some kind of rationalization (whether spoken or not).

[6] The objection that Clyde's sexual adventures logically have little to do with Dreiser's social criticism might naturally arise at this point. Interestingly, Clyde associates women not only with freedom but with money. Such "bacchanalian scenes" (*AT* 61) as make his hair tingle, if not to be had by direct purchase (as in the case of the prostitute who initiates him), still cost. He becomes suitor to Hortense Briggs, who schools him in the ways that materialism is bound up with desire:

> Later, and without having yielded anything more to Clyde than a few elusive and evasive endearments—intimate and languorous reclinings in his arms which promised much but always came to nothing—she made so bold as to indicate to him at different times and in different ways, purses, blouses, slippers, stockings, a hat, which she would like to buy if only she had the money. And he, in order to hold her favor and properly ingratiate himself, proceeded to buy them . . . . (*AT* 86-7)

[7] Dreiser's modernist contemporary T. S. Eliot had J. Alfred Prufrock avoiding a cryptic "overwhelming question" in 1917. The question itself is never expressed: "Oh, do not ask, 'what is it?'/Let us go and make our visit." The gap Eliot insists on leaving in the text opens the door to some obvious speculations, but also to infinite interpretations of the poem, yet simultaneously the lines imply that the question is not the point. As my thesis suggests, Dreiser too felt the "overwhelming question" should not be circumscribed and

directed at one individual.

[8] See the Preface to the Norton Critical Edition of *Sister Carrie* (1991) edited by Pizer and his essay "Self Censorship and Textual Editing" for an elaboration of his choice of copy-text versus "the questionable claims of the Pennsylvania Edition" ("Preface" x).

[9] Coincidentally, the aporic reading "left" carries a connotation of a "liberal" or radical social agenda, which demonstrates further a crucial point about deconstruction. While claiming that the author "left" or planted the word in his text as a bit of wordplay, a free signifier referring to simple direction, political leaning, or other possibilities might seem plausible in a discussion of a writer like James Joyce, it would appear out of the realm of Dreiser's known authorial techniques. However, the deconstructive reader, in revealing how reliance on unstable language undermines any author's circumscribed intentions, is free to offer alternative interpretations of that language as evidence, including interpretations that appear ahistorical, anachronistic, or to ignore biographical and bibliographical fact. The point of this is not to ridicule or parody the author, other methodologies, or the scholars that use them, but to open up the boundaries of texts and the possibilities for readers' involvement in them. If anything, texts are made more "literary" by this process since they appeal to more people in all times.

[10] A version of this essay was presented at the International Theodore Dreiser Society's open session at the American Literature Association's annual conference in San Diego, May 1996. My thanks to Clare Eby, Lewis Fried, Philip Gerber, Yoshinobu Hakutani, and an anonymous referee for their valuable comments on earlier drafts.

Works Cited

Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 5th Edition. Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1988.

Dreiser, Theodore. *An American Tragedy*. New York: Pengiun, 1981.
---. *The Bulwark*. New York: Doubleday, 1946.
---. *Dreiser's Russian Diary*. Thomas P. Riggio, James L. West, III, eds. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1996.
---. *The Financier*. New York and London: Harper, 1912.
---. *Sister Carrie*. New York: Penguin, 1986 (reprint of the Pennsylvania Edition of 1981.)
---. *The Stoic*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1947.
Eliot, T. S. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." *Collected Poems 1909-1962*. Faber and Faber, 1963.
Fishkin, Shelley Fisher. *From Fact to Fiction: Journalism and Imaginative Writing in America*. Baltimore: John Hopkins U P, 1985.
Gerber, Philip. *Theodore Dreiser*. New York: Twayne, 1964.
---. *Theodore Dreiser Revisited*. New York: Twayne, 1992.
Gogol, Miriam, ed. *Theodore Dreiser: Beyond Naturalism*. New York: New York U P, 1995.
Hussman, Lawrence Jr. *Dreiser and His Fiction: A Twentieth-Century Quest*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1983.
Matthiessen, F. O. *Theodore Dreiser*. New York: Dell, 1951.
Mitchell, Lee Clark. *Determined Fictions: American Literary Naturalism*. New York: Columbia U P, 1989.
Orton, Vrest. *Dreiserana, A Book About His Books*. New York: Stratford P, 1929.
Pizer, Donald, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to American Realism and Naturalism: Howells to London*. Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1995.
---. "Preface to the Second Edition." *Sister Carrie,* by Theodore Dreiser. Ed. Donald Pizer. New York: Norton, 1991.
---. "Self-Censorship and Textual Editing." *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*. Ed. Jerome McGann. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985. 144-61.
Thoreau, Henry D. *Walden*. Ed. J. Lyndon Shanley. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1971.
Wolff, Andrea. "Dreiser Constructs Russia." *Dreiser Studies* 27:1 (Spring 1996): 20-35.

The World According to Timothy Titcomb: Putting *Sister Carrie* in Context

Lawrence E. Hussman
Wright State University

During a stimulating session on teaching *Sister Carrie* at the 1997 ALA convention in Baltimore, discussion leader Nancy Warner Barrineau asked the assembled Dreiser specialists if they knew of any effective ways to situate the novel for students in the context of its times. The spur to Professor Barrineau's question was the undeniable distance between the culture that today's enrollees bring to the classroom and the national milieu Dreiser recreated in his first novel. Several creative suggestions ensued, and I offered a method of my own that has served me well over the thirty-plus years I have set about trying to convince university students that *Sister Carrie is* one of the truly trendsetting American novels of our century. My tack is to introduce and teach Dreiser's masterpiece while quoting from a collection of letters of advice written to young men and women of the 1880s, the historical period during which the novel begins. In a kind of nineteenth-century precursor and blend of *The Rules* and *The Book of Virtues,* its author, the editor, poet, and biographer Josiah Gilbert Holland, under the partial pseudonym Timothy Titcomb, Esquire (he is also listed as J.G. Holland on the book cover), seeks through the letters to guide impressionable young people of both genders in matters moral, religious, social, domestic, sartorial, and even linguistic. The ideas Holland espoused were by no means universal among educated readers, of course, and they even exaggerated the kinds of concerns *Sister Carrie's* more thoughtful attackers marshaled against the novel. But they do represent a sizable slice of conservative social opinion in Dreiser's day and the seriousness with

which they were taken says a good deal to today's students about the temper of those earlier times. And more importantly for present purposes, they flowed from the very attitudes that Dreiser often turns upside down.

Holland was a friend of Emily Dickinson and a fellow New Englander who was born in 1819 and died in 1881. Between the years 1850 and 1881, he served as an associate editor of the Springfield, Massachusetts, *Republican,* then as editor of *Scribner's Monthly,* as well as its successor, *Century Magazine.* He and his wife carried on a correspondence with Dickinson, usually together but sometimes separately. Holland is thought by Dickinson scholars to be one of the advocates for the publication of her poems, and a possible love interest. He wrote a *Life of Abraham Lincoln* (in 1866) and several volumes of poetry. But his reputation was built around the book to which I have alluded, *Titcomb's Letters to Young People Single and Married.* This work was first published in 1858 and went through some fifty editions, several after the author's death. Holland wrote a new preface for the work the year he died. My personal copy was published by Charles Scribner's Sons in 1888, the year before Carrie boarded a Chicago-bound train to begin her adventures. I bought my *Titcomb's Letters* for five cents at a Michigan farm auction in the 1960s, a selling price that perhaps reflected the cultural condition of that decadent decade. But since getting hold of a copy of Holland's book now may be difficult for some who teach *Sister Carrie,* I have quoted here a few of the "juicier" passages that form part of its self-proclaimed "wise and inspiring" message. Those who might wish to employ it in a kind of New Historicist Lite presentation of Dreiser's novel to their classes can, therefore, use the present article as a resource.

First, Carrie might have saved herself a great deal of trouble (or maybe invited greater woes) had she been acquainted with Titcomb's advice to young women

encountering forward men like Charles Drouet. The teacher writes:

> I trust *you*. I believe you are virtuous young women, with pure hearts and true intentions; and I know there is no danger to you until you cease to be such. You have an instinct—God's word in your own souls—that tells you when a man takes the first wrong steps toward you; and if you do not repel that step in such a manner that it will never be repeated, do you suppose that anything I could say to you would do you any good?

Again, Titcomb cautions:

> Learn to think kindly of all young men, save those who, you have reason to believe, possess black hearts and foul intentions—those who are enemies of your sex and social purity. (*TL* 103)

Carrie does have some suspicion of Drouet, of course, but allows herself to be seduced by his impressive roll of bills. And Dreiser's point here, as it will be throughout the novel, is that the lure of the material is far too forceful to be resisted by his heroine whose small town training doubtlessly relied on idealistic bromides like Titcomb's, a mix of maxims analogous to today's counsel that inner-city teenagers "just say no" to drugs and premarital sex.

In the world according to Titcomb, a woman's rejection of sexual advances must be part of her program of improving the male of the species through the modeling of virtue. Since women are generally "superior to men," they must play the role of "purifying and elevating influence" for their otherwise dissolute male counterparts. Titcomb sums up women's obligation in this regard as follows: "It is your work to soften and refine men. Men living without you, by themselves, become savage and sinful. The purer

you are, the more are they restrained, and the more are they elevated" (*TL* 132–33).This description of female duty meshes with the classic Madonna complex that Titcomb exhibits unabashedly in a late evocation of the ideal woman:

> The rose sits upon her cheek, and the lily upon her bosom. Good angels are hovering all about her; and seeking some secret recess, she kneels and dedicates herself to Heaven. As she comes into the path, the Tempter looks at her, and slinks away from her sweet and unsuspicious eyes, as if they were windows through which he had caught a glimpse of God. (*TL* 215)

You may find that the women enrolled in your classes regard this as a somewhat difficult standard to attain, but the idea that woman's duty is to bring men to a higher standard of morality through example was a staple of the time, one which Dreiser's contemporary Frank Norris made a major theme in several of his novels. *Sister Carrie,* on the other hand, shows the reader that women are just as subject to the temptations of the flesh as are men, and just as weak in resisting them. In our heroine's case, she is willing to trade her body for more comfortable living conditions and the possibility of greater glory to come.

Carrie not only fails to live up to the Titcombian ideal of piety, she defies one of the teacher's most stringent rules in her quest to make a life of her own after her breakup with Hurstwood. For this she deserves a swift punishment she never receives. She forgets, as Titcomb reminds us, that "a feeling of dependence is native to the female heart" and that "the pride of independency has little or no place there." Moreover, she must never question the male and female "spheres," never quarrel with "God's plan," and so thereby risk "unsexing" herself and becoming a "discord." Rather, she should "recognize [her]

dependence gladly and gracefully" (*TL* 133-34). Carrie, of course, will eventually learn that she is and has always been on her own, dependent on her personal powers to make her way in the world, a revolutionary definition of the womanly role in Dreiser's day.

Again, Carrie should hope that the third man in her life, Bob Ames, will expeditiously ask for her hand in marriage, since, as Titcomb points out, "no man or woman can fully enjoy life unmarried" (*TL* 111). This should be obvious since "a true woman loves a pair of good strong arms, fastened to a pair of broad shoulders, for they can defend her, provide for her . . ." (*TL* 45). Once a woman has recognized her proper function in life, she can bask in the glory of her performance of it. Titcomb advises that "there are few higher compliments that can be paid to a young woman than that which accords to her the character of an excellent housekeeper" (*TL* 125).

This matter of separate gender spheres leads Titcomb to rail against "masculine young women" who don't know their place:

> I deem masculine women abnormal women, and I therefore refer all women who wish to vote, who delight in the public exhibition of themselves, who bemoan the fate which drapes them in petticoats, who quarrel with St. Paul and their lot, who own more rights than they possess; and fail to fulfil [sic] the duties of their sphere while seeking for its enlargement—I refer all these to the eight letters recently addressed to young men. (*TL* 70)

To punctuate his pique, Titcomb denounces all "strong minded women" who need not count themselves among his readers. In contrast, Carrie grows ever more strong minded as Dreiser's novel progresses, her whole personal journey an exercise in constructing a free-standing self.

In a letter titled "Dress–Its Proprieties and Abuses," our mentor gives advice that my students, both male and female, find both highly amusing and enlightening concerning the temper of Carrie's times. In a long disquisition on the perils of choosing the wrong clothing, he addresses women as follows:

> I shall speak only generally; and I say, first, *dress modestly.* It is all well enough for little girls to show their necks, but for a woman to make her appearance in the society of young men with such displays of person as are made in what is so mistakenly called "full dress," is a shame to her. I know what fashion allows in this matter and fashion has many sins to answer for. Thousands of girls dress in a manner that they would discard with horror and disgust, if they knew the trains of thought which are suggested by their presence. I know young men, and I know that there is not one in one hundred who attends a "full dress party," and comes out, as pure and worthy a man as he went in. There is not one in one hundred who does not hold the secret of a base thought suggested by the style of dress which he sees around him. This may tell very badly for young men. Doubtless it does; but we are obliged to take them as we find them. The millennium has not dawned yet, and we have receded a considerable distance from the era of human innocence . . . . If you choose to become the objects of foul fancies among young men, whose respect you are desirous of securing, you know the way. (*TL* 74)

At this point in the classroom discussion, it is well to distribute a fashion magazine from the 1880s. Be prepared here to discipline any salivating male students who begin talking among themselves. You may also wish to have an antidote on hand, since "a young man who cherishes impure images, and indulges in impure conversations with his associates, is poisoned" (*TL* 30). In this regard, if you

want to preempt your male students from the throes of temptation, you may wish to use the Doubleday edition of *Sister Carrie,* rather than the Pennsylvania, wherein Drouet and Hurstwood indulge in lascivious banter with each other, dirty chitchat dropped in the Doubleday.

Let it not be said that Titcomb is a complete prude, however. In the matter of women's dress, he gives some advice that today's students might recognize as still *au courant:* "It is every woman's duty to make herself pleasant and attractive by such raiment and ornament as shall best accord with the style of beauty with which she is endowed." This personal beauty "was intended to be a source of pleasure–the fitting accompaniment of that which in humanity is the most nearly allied to the angelic." Here is an historic manifestation of the "beauty myth" that Naomi Wolf bemoans today. But certainly Carrie, with her obsessive interest in clothes and jewelry, needs Titcomb's admonition to present herself attractively far less than another piece of his advice: "Dress is a subject which should occupy few of the thoughts of a true woman, whether beautiful or not" (*TL* 72-73). Even worse, Carrie chooses to flaunt her looks as an actor, the very basest career she could have chosen, since "the theater is a school of vice" (*TL* 79).

Students may notice a double standard when it comes to characters cursing in *Sister Carrie*. Here is one area in which Dreiser did not boldly challenge the taboos of the times. Although Drouet, Hurstwood, and a number of the minor male characters are given to occasionally venting their frustrations or anger with a well chosen epithet (even in the Doubleday version), Carrie and the other women show remarkable restraint. The closest Carrie gets to losing her linguistic composure, despite numerous provocations brought on by the men in her life who seek to use her, comes during an argument with Drouet. He tells her that Hurstwood, whom she has been seeing in his

absence, is a married man. Drouet then accuses her of taking advantage of him:

> "It's not so," said Carrie, and, "I'm not going with anybody else. You have been as miserable and inconsiderate as you can be. I hate you, I tell you, and I wouldn't live with you another minute. You're a big, insulting," here she hesitated and used no word at all—"or you wouldn't talk that way." (*SC* 228)

Better to stifle herself than compromise the standard of womanly comportment with an epithet.

Not even the obnoxious Mrs. Hurstwood resorts to strong language in her condemnations of her browbeaten husband. Of all the women characters in the novel, she might be the one most likely to resist the rule of decorous womanly diction. After all, she certainly ignores Titcomb's testimony that "the wife shall bend to the husband that her will shall, at last be subject" (*TL* 105). But in *Sister Carrie,* even the carping fishwife bates her breath, as Titcomb recommends:

> And now, young woman, if you are one of the sharp ones, and are tempted to say sharp things, remember that you are in very great danger of injuring yourself, not only in your own soul, but in the eyes of all those whom you imagine you are pleasing. (*TL* 115)

In denying his women characters a profane word, Dreiser was no doubt aware of the consequences of violating a strong literary proscription of his day, made more understandable to contemporary students by the following Titcomb tirade:

> Young women are very apt to imbibe another bad habit, namely the use of slang. I was walking along the street the other day when I met an elegantly dressed lady and gentleman along the sidewalk. My attention was the

> more attracted to them because they were evidently strangers. At any rate they impressed me as being very thoroughly refined and genteel people. As I came within hearing of their voices—they were quietly chatting along the way—I heard these words from the woman's lips. "You may bet your life on that." I was disgusted. I could almost have boxed her ears. I remember once being in the company of a belle—one who had a winter's reign in Washington. Some kind of game was in progress, when, in a moment of surprise, she exclaimed, "My Gracious." Now you may regard this as a finical notion, but I tell you that woman fell as flatly in my esteem as if she had uttered an oath.

Titcomb then admits that he does not wish to "insinuate that all young women use language as coarse as this," but far too many stoop to such "vulgar" terminology. This is a great tragedy, since women do so "at a very sad expense" to their "reputations" (*TL* 118-19). Obviously, he would not approve of the language that Drouet, Hurstwood, and some of the other men in the novel employ in the Pennsylvania edition. In a letter addressed to young men, he refuses even to discuss profanity, since it is "too offensive a habit for any man who reads a respectable book to indulge in" (*TL* 29).

As for Hurstwood's pursuit of Carrie, the bar manager might have saved himself from the gas jets had he read Titcomb on marriage. The counsel-giver decrees that, once wed, a man "must not let any human being" come between him and his wife, "under any circumstances" (*TL* 146). In order to avoid such a possibility, a husband should shun contact with any unmarried woman because "there is nothing but danger in the intimacy of a married heart with an unmarried one, unless there be other relationships that justify it" (*TL* 186). These words should shock today's students. For them, divorce has become something like an expectation.

Armed with examples such as those I have quoted above, you can graphically display for your classes at least one strand that made up the social fabric of late nineteenth-century United States culture. In the context of *Titcomb's Letters,* explaining the trouble Dreiser was courting when he did not adequately punish his heroine at the end of the novel should be easier. Likewise, the whole legend surrounding the suppression of *Sister Carrie* by Doubleday can make more sense to students introduced to the novel in tandem with Titcomb. In this connection, I also like to tell classes studying *Sister Carrie* the story of the attempted suppression, some fifteen years later, of *The "Genius"* by John S. Sumner and The New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, as well as other attempts at censorship by American bluenoses throughout the century. Students so introduced should more fully appreciate Dreiser's acknowledged role as the most important American pioneer of truth telling in fiction.

Works Cited

Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie.* Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1987.

Holland, J.G. *Titcomb's Letters to Young People Single and Married, By Timothy Titcomb, Esquire.* Fiftieth Edition. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888.

Notable Elements in the Translation of *Sister Carrie* into Russian

Irina Bassis
Iowa State University

Etymologically, translation means "carrying across." Hence, the translator's work suggests the possibility of relocation, displacement, and defamilarization. The work of the translator has been variously described as "craft," "practice," "science," or "art." Accordingly, translation has been defined as "manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose" (Hermans 11), as "rendering of a source language (SL) text into the target language text (TL) so as to ensure that (1) the surface meaning of the two would be approximately similar and (2) the structures of the SL will be preserved as closely as possible but not so closely that the TL structures will be seriously distorted" (Bassnett 2). Lawrence Venuti perceives translation as an inevitably and inherently violent act, "the forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible to the target-language reader. . . . The aim of translation is to bring back a cultural other as the same, the recognizable, even the familiar" (18). Gayatri Spivak states that translation is "the most intimate act of reading" (183). According to Spivak, when the translator surrenders to the text, the situation becomes "more erotic than ethical," for the translator prefers to speak in the original language about intimate things and matters (183, 187). Rachel May expresses the idea of translation as a process of reconstruction of the work "at all levels, from bottom to top and from top to bottom" (1). Theorists continue to deliberate whether translation entails violent manipulation of the source text or manipulative violence played upon the target text.

Translation as an act and process of communication is often equated with a loving yet violent relationship (not necessarily a happy marriage), and the representation of the translator differs among scholars. Spivak sees the relationship between the original text and translation in gendered terms: to her, the original text is always male and the translator female. To Venuti, the translator is a "paradoxical hybrid, at once dilettante and artisan," who is also "the agent of a cultural practice that is conducted under continuous self-monitoring" (1, 11). May compares the translator to an orchestra conductor, "who brings out the various voices in a work to best advantage," and "becomes a creative contributor to the larger cultural phenomenon to text *plus* translations, part of what Benjamin call the 'afterlife' of the work" (86, 87).

Any translator–skillful and experienced or otherwise–consciously or unconsciously selects a method for translation. The choice of methods was vividly described by Friedrich Schleiermacher, German theologian and philosopher, in 1813. Schleiermacher argued that "there are only two [methods]. Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him" (qtd. in Venuti 19). Basically the choice is between the domesticating method (bringing the author back home), or the foreignizing method (sending the reader abroad). The end results are different: the method of domestication or transparency produces a text that flows effortlessly in the target language–stressing fluency, effacing all traces of the source language–while the foreignizing method of translation rejects fluency in favor of asserting the linguistic and cultural difference of a foreign text by disrupting and deviating from native norms of the target (receptor) language.

Recognizing the difficulties in producing a good

translation, many theorists note the importance of translation for any culture. Translation is identified as a means (or vehicle) by which culture travels; it is perceived as cultural extension and presentation of national identities to foreign lands. It is important to recognize the ideological implications: the translator always brings to the text a set of cultural assumptions about the text, about his/her own role, and about language, literature, and its readers.

The Soviet school of translation came into existence in the 1920s as a natural outcome of the old tradition that began in the seventeenth and eighteenth century on the one hand and the implementation of the new nationalities policy of the Soviet Union on the other. Valdimir Lenin saw translation as a cementing ingredient for the newly emerged multinational state comprised of more than a hundred different languages and various ethnic groups. He personally supported Maxim Gorky's World Literature Publishing House (founded in 1918, almost immediately after the revolution), which brought together many famous and highly talented translators from the old "academic" school–people like A. N. Veselovsky and F. D. Batyushkov, who translated foreign classics–and writers who addressed the the question of the propagandization of literatures of the peoples of the Union. The task of the World Literature Publishing House was threefold: first, to bring the greatest attainments of world classics to the masses of revolutionary Russia; second, to financially support and morally encourage writers; and third, to make sure the previously existing (or newly established) cultural contacts among the peoples of the Union and with the world would be maintained. The main requirement was clear: translations had to be scientifically prepared and highly artistic. In order to fulfill it, Gorky demanded from translators substantial knowledge about the original author, the literature of the country, and the historic period.

Kornei Chukovsky, a renowned translator from English, received a difficult assignment: to come up with a manual that would cover many problems of the practice of translation, since at that point there existed no book-length study in the field. In 1918 Chukovsky published a small in-house manual under the title of *Printsipy Perevoda* (Principals of Translation). After many subsequent publications (which extended and significantly advanced the initial manual) *Principles* grew into what is known nowadays as "the Bible of the Soviet school"– Chukovsky's *A High Art*.

The Soviet school of translation has always had a very sensitive and attentive national audience. Principles, problems, methods, approaches and assumptions of the profession are discussed and debated on the all-Union level through such annual collections as *Masterstvo Perevoda* (The Craft of Translation) and *Tetradi Perevodchika* (Translator's Notebooks). Such leading publications as a monthly magazine *Inostrannaya Literature* (Foreign Literature) and a weekly newspaper *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (Literary Gazette) do not ignore the problems of translation and its studies. Frequent forums, debates, and discussions helped to work out the terminology appropriate for translation criticism and the methodology of translation. There are many types of translation defined by the Soviet school, which in many aspects coincide with those familiar in the West: *massoviy* (popular) translation, *akademicheskiy* (academic or scholarly), *semanticheskiy* (semantic), *volniy* (free), *nauchniy* (scientific), *tochniy* (precise). The Soviet school takes pride in inventing a type of translation called "artistic," which is "adequate, full-valued and equivalent to its original in form, style, and content, as well as in practical principles for dealing with the permutations among these basic qualities of a literary work. It is founded on a respect that impels translators to learn

everything they can about the original text, its author, its cultural and temporal context, and its place in world literature" * (Leighton 68). Soviet artistic translation is an ideal of a high art based on understanding the sacredness of the original text and the artistic creativity of the translator. Therefore the professional demands and expectations placed on the translator are unusually high. Translators have to be fully bilingual and well-informed about various subjects: stylistics, geography, history, literature, philosophy, and social science. Many famous Soviet translators wrote books about the countries whose works they translated–scholarly studies, literary biographies, histories–and in many cases were poets and writers themselves.

The Soviet school has always demonstrated a remarkably close connection between theory and practice which resulted in establishing the right vocabulary, an effective methodology, and high standards for artistic translation. As Lauren Leighton notes, the school is optimistic in the assumption that all problems have solutions, and they approach the problem of untranslatability with greater certitude than their American colleagues. "This has enabled them to acknowledge the reality of the language barrier, put the question itself behind, and concentrate attention where it belongs: on what should be done to convey a literary work from one language to another as faithfully as language permits" (Leighton 12).

Yet Soviet translators' duties included also those of a propagandist, who propagates friendship among peoples and unites them by producing major works not only by foreign authors, but by representatives of all nationalities

---

* By "adequate translation" Soviet scholars mean a text-oriented translation; "full-valued translation" denotes a reader-oriented

and languages of the Soviet Union. Many members of the school envisioned translation as not only an artistic act but a political act as well. Levon Mkrtchian, an Armenian critic, states that "the translator always takes part in the socio-political life of the country. In the modern world a translation can even be a powerful factor on behalf of progress, and a weapon in the struggle for progress" (qtd. in Leighton 35).

My own approach in this article is to look at the actual translation of *Sister Carrie*, turning from criticism and theory to the actual practice of a well-known Soviet literary translator, Mikhail Volosov. By putting the translation next to its original I will be looking for clues to cultural, political, linguistic and ideological forces that helped to shape the translation.

The popularity of Dreiser in the former Soviet Union is a well-known phenomenon. Copies of his works are available in numerous translations; a version of *Sister Carrie* has been put to music by a Latvian composer, Reimond Paulus; Konstantin Stanislavsky planned to stage Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, and a copy of *Sister Carrie* traveled to the North Pole with Russian discoverers. Volosov's translation of *Sister Carrie*, which first appeared in 1927, is the only known translation into Russian.

Dreiser himself recognized that his style was sloppy and awkward, but I doubt that he would have changed anything if he had been told that his style complicated the translator's job. When an English and a Russian version are juxtaposed, the first visual impression is the presence of shorter and more frequent paragraphs in the Russian text. May argues that "punctuation appears to be a locus of translational control, the place where translators assert the most authority" (6). Volosov illustrates this point by translating the first sentence of the first chapter, omitting nothing but making it into the opening paragraph of the

book. Thus, from the very start he tries to "smooth" over the style of *Sister Carrie*, to introduce some breaks and pauses which are not present in the original text.

The second sentence of the same chapter opens a second paragraph in the Russian text. The translator surprisingly leaves out the month of the year, though Dreiser clearly states: "It was in August, 1889" (*SC* 1). The sentence is so simple and translatable that it seems hard to understand the translator's motives until a similar case shows up in the text again. In the same chapter, when the narrator describes the emergence of the new slang word "masher," he pinpoints the time when it came into use: "sprung into general use among Americans in 1880" (*SC* 3). It seems that the definite date is hard to avoid in any style of translation, but in this case Volosov comes up with the following (simultaneously being elusive about the country where the novel takes place): "a more recent word, which was generally recognized [literally– granted citizenship rights] in the end of the nineteenth century" (R *SC* 65). Even more astonishing evidence of avoiding dates is presented during the description of the city: "In 1889 Chicago had the peculiar qualifications of growth . . ." (*SC* 12). The translator finds an approximation: "In those years Chicago had all the peculiarities [features] of a fast growing city" (R *SC* 75).

Why is the translator shunning dates; what can be his reason for this strange behavior? It is important to keep in mind the political moment of translation of the novel. It happened in 1927, exactly ten years after the October revolution. The Soviet Union was the first and only socialist country, striving to survive and prove to the rest of the world the erroneous nature of capitalism. Dreiser's novel was a perfect choice for translation, because it was a testimony of social injustice, a social document, and an account of life in the United States produced by one of its citizens. To leave an impression that nothing has changed

in America, that things will continue to be the way they were described in the novel, that capitalism has no future–only an unidentifiable past–seemingly, the translator was manipulating the text with these goals in mind.

The introductory description of Carrie is broken into two sentences with a little paraphrased addition. Instead of "She was eighteen years of age, bright, timid, and full of the illusions of ignorance and youth" (*SC* 1), the Russian text says: "Caroline has just turned eighteen. She was a bright girl, but timid, full of illusions typical of ignorance and youth" (R *SC* 63).The manner of translation changes Dreiser's priorities along with the intonation and rhythm of the original sentence. Volosov emphasizes Carrie's youth and inexperience by breaking down the flow of adjectives in predicative position and by introducing an opposition–"bright, but timid"– which also hints at Carrie's lack of worldly experience.

Volosov slightly manipulates the syntactical and lexical units of the text to convey a delicately refashioned version of Carrie and other characters and their relationships. For instance, Dreiser's sentence, "To be sure, there was always the next station, where one might descend and return" (1), in the translation literally reads, "To be sure, she could descend at the nearest station and return home." The word "home" is inserted here because the Russian language often requires a strong sense of place, but the lexical replacement of "next" for "nearest" ties "the nearest station" with "home" by strong semantic ties, implying more attachment to home than Carrie ever displays in the novel.

The translator reads Carrie as a typical representative of her class and wants his readers to have a similar impression. That is why Dreiser's "she was a fair example of the middle American class–two generations removed from the emigrant" (2)–becomes "a fair example of the

American woman of the middle class whose not only parents but great-grandparents lived in America" (R *SC* 64). "The American woman" has to be specified due to linguistic peculiarities of Russian language, i.e. the presence of gender system. "Great-grandparents" in this context sounds more emphatic than a plain "two generations." Furthermore, the word "emigrant" is totally removed from the text. My presumption is that in 1927, when the text was translated, all efforts were bent on consolidating the Soviet Union and accelerating its post-revolution and post-Civil war reconstruction. The memory of the great number of people who emigrated after the revolution of 1917 was still so fresh that the choice of words might have been dictated (or, rather, influenced) by political considerations. On the other hand, the Russian mentality would not necessarily consider two generations quite enough for developing a strong sense of middle class beliefs, so the translator was "domesticating" the text, making it intelligent and recognizable for its readers.

To my great surprise, I found that the translator frequently not only divided one long sentence in two or sometimes three (which can be explained by the peculiarities of conveying certain structures into another language), but that he also felt free to add or delete words, phrases, parts of sentences, whole sentences and even sentence-clusters. This contradicts the method of artistic translation, which greatly values the unity of the original text. It also runs counter to beliefs of Soviet translation theorists who devoted much attention to all aspects of style, intonation in particular. Stylistically, intonation is derived from an assortment of different elements, such as syntactic structure, rhythm—comprised of features like pauses, stops, rises, and falls—tone, and stress. Leighton argues that intonation "is the most sensitive instrument for conveying the impact of a style and thus a meaning of a

work, the author's world view, and even the national character of the author's literature" (99). By cutting sentences in half, combining them, breaking the original paragraphs into sub-paragraphs, inserting new parts of sentences or omitting existing ones, the translator redefines the work from above, replacing a narrative voice with a more authoritative one, reevaluating the author's words as his own and asserting a semblance of authorship over the text.

To explain my point, I will address the scene when Drouet and Carrie become acquainted. The English version says, "He had been fidgeting, and with natural intuition she felt a certain interest growing in that quarter" (2). The Russian version, when translated word by word, sounds like this: "Instinctively, Carrie understood that [she] had interested him" (R *SC* 65). "Natural intuition" is replaced by a dry "instinct"–is this a tribute to Dreiser's "dark" naturalism? The first part of the sentence is completely missing, the other is leveled and smoothed, to correspond (more or less) to proper Russian grammar and norms of behavior. This is a case of evident acculturation of the text by using fluent translation. Further evidence occurs in the translator's desire to avoid slang, to erase it as if it does not exist in the original work. For instance, when Drouet says "The hotels are swell" (*SC* 3), Volosov does not hear him, rushing to translate the next sentence.

In a successful attempt to deliver a slightly "better" Drouet to the Russian reader, Volosov adds a descriptive epithet "large" to the sentence "He was a type of the traveling canvasser for a [large] manufacturing house" (*SC* 3), augmenting Drouet's importance and elevating him in Carrie's eyes. In another instance the translator makes Drouet look more decent, when instead of the English "vulnerable object" (for Drouet to prey upon), Volosov comes up with a "fitting object." So, according to the Russian text, Drouet was not looking for "vulnerable

objects" (such as Carrie, for example), but only picking "fitting" ones. This evident correction of Drouet's manner continues when the drummer, in an effort to impress Hurstwood, tells the latter about his little adventure on the way to Chicago and calls Carrie "a little peach." Volosov replaces it with a "charming girl," taking out the slang and undue familiarity of the character.

When analyzed, the Russian translation presents a battle site between two forces acting upon it. The first force is the internal struggle between the narrator and translator for control of the text's language; the second is the outer force, the conflicting cultural attitudes toward narrative style in the original and receptor languages. The politics of style are closely connected with the policy of language adopted by the Communist party. Vladimir Lenin advocated the usage of Russian literary language, against foreign words that were "perverting" the Russian speech. Maxim Gorky wrote in 1933: "We should demand from each word maximum effectiveness, maximum inspirational power. We will achieve that only when we develop a respect for language as our material, when we learn to shuck off its empty hull, when we cease to distort words and make them incomprehensible and deformed" (qtd. in May 61). In the 1930s and 1940s a movement away from popular and folk language made colloquial speech and folk elements unacceptable in literature. Basically, instead of literary language this movement propagated a neutral style. This prevalence of a neutral layer of lexicon is evident in the Russian translation of *Sister Carrie* as well.

There are several instances in the text (chapters VI, XI, XIII, to enumerate just a few) when words are italicized to capture the reader's attention and make them more emphatic, which certainly disrupts the even flow of narration. The Russian test is devoid of any disruptions: the italics are absent. Furthermore, when the original

conveys the accented speech of a German bar owner in New York (i.e., Ch. XXXIV), the Russian text produces the same bar owner speaking non-accented Russian, though it would have been fairly easy for the translator to imitate the German accent. Other vivid instances of neutralizing the speech of characters are found in chapters III, VI, VII, XL. Dreiser, when describing the shop girls, says, "They . . . were rich in curiosity, and strong in daring and slang," and leaves what can be literally translated as "the curiosity was welling out of them" (R *SC* 83). Certainly, the girls' behavior is modified–they look innocent, but extremely curious, which is not a sin–and the general impression is more favorable. It also shows that the translator disliked the author's choice of the word "common" when the machine girls were described. When the narrator states, "They seemed satisfied with their lot, and were in a sense 'common'" (*SC* 42), the translator disregards the second constituent of the sentence and generates "They seemed satisfied with their lot." Volosov resorts to the same trick when Carrie buys herself a pretty umbrella after the first rain in the city and her sister considers it a waste of money. Carrie assures herself that "She was not going to be a common shop-girl" (*SC* 43). The Russian text yields, "They shouldn't think that a shop-girl would be content with rags!" This text makes quite a different implication, emphasizing Carrie's desire for nice things and her constant dissatisfaction with her lot.

The translator exercises authorial power when he attempts to trim down Dreiser's style by means of frequent omissions or erasure of parts of sentences or whole sentences. When Drouet's narrated monologue states, "She was not like the common run of store-girls. She wasn't silly" (*SC* 54), the translator faces the word "common" again. This time Volosov resorts not only to combining both sentences, but also to substitution and addition when

he writes: "She did not resemble usual store-girls, who only recently arrived from little provincial towns: she was far from being silly" (R *SC* 122). This way the "usual" store girls are, as a rule, from little provincial towns and silly. "Usual" is, of course, a synonym for "common," but no synonyms can be completely interchangeable or have the same connotation. In Russian, "usual" is more neutral than "common"; thus the translator's intention to neutralize the speech and manners of the characters is apparent.

When Dreiser describes the strike of tram workers in New York, the translator confronts a precarious situation: first of all, he must truthfully convey the form and content of the novel, and second, he needs to make sure that the content conforms to the political beliefs of the Soviet government. To do so, Volosov manipulates the text. When Hurstwood recognizes that he does not sympathize with the corportations–"but strength was with them. So was property and public utility"–the translator (unexpectedly) informs the reader: "but strength was with them. Besides, the residents need cars." This is an example of the so-called "free" translation, or, as Russian translation theorists call it, "concoctions," when the author conveys a very distant approximation of the original.

Volosov's biased attitude manifests itself when instead of "small and wooden" houses of the strikers he produces "small and wretched," as if implicitly naming more reasons for their strike and additionally dramatizing the whole episode. When the narrator says, "Labor was having its little war," the Russian text omits the somewhat diminishing "little" and clearly identifies the action together with introducing the deictic "here": "The workers were having their war here." The use of deixis, which orients the speaker in time and place with respect to the audience and the action, is the most obvious sign of the narrator's world view. When used in third person

narration (which is the case with *Sister Carrie*), such expressions as "here," "now," and "today" pinpoint the narrator as present at the scene. The effect on the reader is not identification with the strikers, but deep sympathy for their plight. To portray the strikers in an ideologically correct light, Volosov purifies their actions and jettisons a significant part of the sentence: "About certain corners and nearby saloons small groups of men were lounging" (*SC* 316). Definitely, "lounging" is devoid of any activity, and in conjunction with "saloons" conjures up the picture which Volosov tries to evade. Thus, the Russian reader gets: "At cross-roads there were [standing] some small groups."

The disparity between the two cultures–the source and the target–is pronounced in the translator's temptation to remove the number of rooms in various apartments where Carrie lived. For example, the New York flat with "six rooms and a bath, running in a straight line," is qualified as "a tiny flat with a bath." I am sure that the choice of words was not dictated by the Russian superior sense of space, but conversely by the living conditions of the majority of the population at that time. As Dreiser recalls in his *Russian Diary* after a visit to the new workers' flats, "in each room dwell from two to seven people–making for each apartment (of three rooms) an average of 10 to 15 people" (90). His friend, a young Russian critic named Sergei Dinamov, lived in better conditions: "He had three small rooms in a shabby frame building, and there were four members of his family" (88). The translator reduced the number of rooms in Chicago and new York apartments to make it intelligible for the reader, thus domesticating the text.

The Russian text shows more affection and attachment in the Carrie-Hurstwood relationship. This is achieved by manipulating the verbs "like" and "love" in the text. For instance, when Hurstwood thinks, "she likes me all right,"

the Russian version says: "She loves me." "Don't you care for me at all?" (*SC* 218) is literally translated as "Don't you love me at all?" When Hurstwood confesses, "I wanted you too much" (*SC* 218), the Russian Carrie hears "I love you too much." Simultaneously, in the Russian text Hurstwood shifts from the past tense into the present, indicating that his love is still very much alive.

When Carrie becomes dissatisfied with him and "began to look upon Hurstwood wholly as a man, and not as a lover or husband," the moral norms intervene in the Russian text and the translation says: "She began to look upon Hurstwood as not a lover, but a real husband" (R *SC* 335). Unquestionably, "the great and mighty language" (as described by Leo Tolstoy) has all the means to convey the semantic difference of nouns, but the translator chooses language which obscures the possibility of anything other than the assumption of wifely duty for Carrie.

As I have already mentioned, the Russian text presents a dramatic battlefield between the attempts to domesticate the novel and to foreignize it. The translator maintains the English measure of distance, the mile, and does not convert it into the metric system. On the other hand, when Drouet suggests taking a car, the translator identifies it as a "cab" (which is very foreign and somewhat archaic), not as a "taxi," which is neutral. When the word "militia" is used by Dreiser, it is interpreted as "police," not by its closest synonym, which is "militsia" in Russian. "Police" was used in tzarist times to denote a repressive organ of power. At the time of the translation the word had both connotations–archaic and foreign–which definitely helped to maintain the aura of foreignness.

In many instances Volosov's rearrangements are a simple matter of Russian usage. Russians do not say "I haven't seen you for six weeks." They would say "I haven't seen you for a month and a half." The word

"dozen" is almost obsolete in the language, so "dozen times" is translated as "ten times," and "half a dozen" as "five times." The exclamation "by God" usually denotes a highly religious person, so such instances in the text are translated as a more emphatic "damn it." As a rule, the translation is less saturated with superfluous language than the original. "An earlier exodus this year of people" is neutralized by a simple construction, "the public started to leave early this year." Whenever possible, the translator tries to approximate morphological similarities, as in "clatter and clang"–"grokhot i gul."

Yet sometimes Volosov appears to substitute too readily. Where Dreiser has "millionaires," Volosov has "large capitalists," though there is a noun "millioner" in the language. Dreiser's "showy crush" has been modified to read "a thick throng." The statement "you are not happy" is converted into "you are not lucky," while "error" turns into "deed," or the semblance of "action."

In general, Volosov's temptation to "authorize" the text–to improve it visually as well as stylistically, to remove redundancies, repetitions, fillers and superfluous language–leads to an almost complete leveling of narrative style. I do believe that the time has come for a new, more modern translation, one that would fully correspond to the artistic method of translation. Russian theorists of translation agree that the work of art is immortal, while translation lasts only for its generation.

Works Cited

Bassnett, Susan. *Translation Studies*. London: Methuen, 1980.

Dreiser, Theodore. *Dreiser Looks at Russia*. New York: Boni & Liveright, 1928.

---. *Dreiser's Russian Diary*. Ed. Thomas P. Riggio and James L.W. West, III. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania

P, 1996.

---. *Sestra Kerri*. Trans. M. Volosov. Moscow: Pravda, 1955.

---. *Sister Carrie*. New York: Heritage, 1939.

Hermans, Theo. "Introduction: Translation Studies and a New Paradigm." *The Manipulation of Literature*. Ed. T. Hermans. London: Croom Helm, 1985, 3-15.

Leighton, Lauren G. *Two Worlds, One Art: Literary Translation in Russia and America*. Dekalb: Northern Illinois U P, 1991.

May, Rachel. *The Translator in the Text: On Reading Russian Literature in English*. Evanston: Northwestern U P, 1994.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakrovorty. *Outside in the Teaching Machine*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Venuti, Laurence. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. New York and London: Routledge, 1995.

---. *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectively, Ideology*. New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

News & Notes

A number of Dreiserians recently received a thoughtful gift: a copy of Richard Lehan's *Theodore Dreiser: His World and His Novels* (1969). When Southern Illinois University Press decided to take this pioneering work off of its list, Professor Lehan sent copies to Dreiserians. We salute and honor Professor Lehan for the nearly thirty-year run of his book.

Jim West has taken a break from working on Dreiser. His *William Styron, A Life* (Random House) will be published this spring. Larry Hussman has two books in press: he has edited Marguerite Tjader's memoir, *Love that Will Not Let Me Go: My Time with Theodore Dreiser*, and written *Harbingers of a Century: The Novels of Frank Norris* (both Peter Lang). The University of Pennsylvania Press has published a new paperback issue of the 1981 *Sister Carrie*, with a new introduction by Tom Riggio. Clare Eby's *Dreiser and Veblen, Saboteurs of the Status Quo* will be published by Missouri this fall. Paul Orlov's *An American Tragedy: Perils of the Self Seeking "Success"* has been published by Bucknell University Press. Keith Newlin's *Selected Letters of Hamlin Garland* (co-edited with Joseph B. McCullough) was published by the University of Nebraska Press in March; and his *Hamlin Garland: A Bibliography, with a Checklist of Unpublished Letters* will be released by Whitston Press in April.

There will be two Dreiser sessions at the American Literature Association meeting in San Diego on May 29 & 31. Paul Orlov chairs "Dreiser Today," with papers by Philip Gerber ("On Dreiser's Trail Through Germany and Russia"), Renate von Bardeleben ("Dreiser's Diaristic Mode"), and Miriam Gogol ("New Directions in Dreiser Scholarship"). Yoshinobu Hakutani chairs "New Critical Views of Dreiser," with papers by Nancy Warner Barrineau ("Dreiser and Steven Millhauser's *Martin Dressler*"), Michael Sanders ("Recycled Romance in *Jennie Gerhardt*"), and Stephen C. Brennan ("Dreiser's 'The Second Choice'").

The Dreiser Society web site is now up and operating at http://www.uncwil.edu/dreiser/. The site includes the latest Dreiser information, calls for papers, past issues of Society Newsletters, links to other Dreiser sites, and an electronic discussion list. To subscribe, send an email to mailserv@uncwil.edu. The message should simply state: subscribe DREISER. To send mail to the list, address it to dreiser@uncwil.edu.